



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

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News Release

ICE PROVIDES RECORD SUPPORT TO LAW ENFORCEMENT COUNTERPARTS

Specialized ICE Unit in Vermont Assists Law Enforcement Nearly 670,000 Times in FY 2004

WILLISTON, VT – The Law Enforcement Support Center (LESC), a critical information-sharing center within the Department of Homeland Security, has set a new standard for supporting federal, state and local law enforcement agencies nationwide by providing timely responses to nearly 670,000 immigration requests for assistance in a single year – an increase of roughly 12.3 percent over the prior fiscal year.

Located in Williston, Vt., the LESC is a component of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. Every day of the year, 24 hours per day, the LESC provides support to law enforcement agencies nationwide by researching and providing information on the immigration status of foreign nationals who are the subject of police investigations.

The 300-person unit receives electronic inquiries from law enforcement organizations and typically provides responses within ten minutes. This information enables police in the field to make important decisions about officer and public safety. In many cases, the information also leads to arrests for immigration and other federal criminal violations.

The LESC receives electronic inquiries from police via the National Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (NLETS). In turn, the LESC searches more than 93 million immigration records and provides police with information on the foreign national under investigation. During Fiscal Year 2004, the LESC provided responses to 667,460 requests for assistance from police agencies in all 50 states. This eclipses the FY 2003 record of 594,352 responses.

Michael J. Garcia, the Department of Homeland Security Assistant Secretary for ICE, said, “The men and women of the LESC have a proven track record supporting thousands of police officers around the nation. The assistance provided by this center is critical to safeguarding our communities and restoring integrity to the nation’s immigration system.”

LESC Unit Chief, J. Scott Blackman added, “Law enforcement organizations across the country have come to rely on the LESC for accurate and timely response to inquiries on foreign nationals under investigation. Often the information provided by the LESC contributes to the safety of police officers and the communities they serve.”

On a daily basis, special agents at the LESC also assist ICE agents in their investigations. In situations where state or local authorities detain an individual sought by ICE for criminal or immigration violations, the LESC can place a detainer with the local department and notify the nearest ICE agent for immediate follow up.

Each month, the LESC places more than 1,000 immigration detainers with police agencies nationwide on individuals wanted by ICE. During FY 2004, agents at the LESC placed more than 15,000 immigration detainers with police agencies around the nation. An average of 42 detainers are placed every 24 hours.

Another critical function of the LESC is to staff and answer the ICE / Homeland Security tip-line: "866 DHS-2ICE." During FY 2004, law enforcement technicians at the tip-line answered more than 27,000 calls. Officials at the LESC analyze the tips and refer those considered viable law enforcement leads to the appropriate field office for further action. During FY 2004, the LESC forwarded more than 3,500 leads to field agents.

At the same time, members of the LESC team continue to enter ICE records into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) at a rapid rate. During FY 2004, more than 51,700 records were entered, bringing the total number of ICE records in NCIC to 155,645. Records entered into NCIC include deported felons, absconders and other violators.

During the past year, LESC efforts have contributed to ICE's Operation Predator, ICE anti-smuggling investigations, the Alien Absconder Initiative and many other individual law enforcement operations both within DHS and other agencies.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).